Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025 with funding from
North Carolina Digital Heritage Center

https://archive.org/details/signetspring19651965quee

signet

SPRING 1965

ESSAYS

To Be Alone/*Marney Collins*/3
A Proposal/*Bea Upson*/20

STORIES

Hugh Baby/*Becky Ballentine*/8
Pop/*Linda Folk*/14
Goodbye, Jamie/*Susan Hales*/24
Pheasants/*Martha Winders*/36
On the Dunes/*Rose Mitchell*/47
The Visit/*Mary Margaret Rogan*/58
The Race/*Carol Cole*/61

SKETCHES

Charleston/*Jacqueline Poitou*/29
Star Island/*Jacqueline Poitou*/32
Snow/*Elizabeth Kerr*/52
The Water Lily/*Jane Cotter*/54
Louis/*Mary Margaret Rogan*/56
Conversation/*Judy Wood*/67

POEMS

On the Beach/*Rose Mitchell*/6
Alone In Chatham/*Carol Cole*/7
I Am Running/*Jeannie Simms*/11
Waking City/*Bea Upson*/12
City Corner/*Bea Upson*/13
The Field/*Carole Cameron*/17
Mozart/*Mary Lou Poot*/18
Non-Semantics/*Mary Lou Poot*/19
Finis/*Carol Cole*/23
Tides/*Paul B. Newman*/26
At Gayhead/*Carol Cole*/35
Alone, Content . . ./*Judy Wood*/43
Dilema/*Marjorie T. Kirby*/44
Un suspiro/*Marjorie T. Kirby*/44
Water/*Bea Upson*/50
Glucksritter/*Marney Collins*/51
Triolet: Mimosa/*Marney Collins*/51
And Then There Were None/*Caroline Dillon*/55
Winter/*Elizabeth Earle*/57
To Spring/*Ellen Barrier*/66
Passe/*Elizabeth Kerr*/69
Question/*Lillie Ann Robinson*/69

ART

Cover/*Rhett Sapp*
The Lizard/*Susan Burleson*/17
The Blackbird/*Pam Grebe*/27
Shell/*Lee Braman*/28
Instructor/*Rhett Sapp*/45
Palm Trees/*Jane Mack*/46
Water Lily/*Bonnie North*/54

To Be Alone

Marney Collins

A person who is alone seems to attract others, while one who is lonely repels them. My instruction in this truth occurred one summer at the Harvard Summer School, where I was at various times both alone and lonely.

Now, to be alone is to be by oneself, enjoying one's own company and thoughts, and free to do whatever takes the fancy, with no worries about accommodating someone else's personality or desires. No matter how considerate or distant they may be, if one is with others they are there, and the liberty to do exactly as one wants is prevented; people cannot be ignored. Being alone is a physical as well as mental condition, and can be a refreshing and rewarding experience. Loneliness, on the other hand, is never pleasant, and does not depend on being alone. In a crowd of strangers, or of friends, we can be equally lonely if we feel that no one wants to talk or listen to us; that we are neither welcome nor important to the others in the group. It is also possible to be alone and lonely at the same time, wishing someone would care enough to visit us or talk to us, if only to inquire about our health or interests, when the need to communicate is strong, and there is a sense of frustration in being cut off from other people.

I have often found that when I want to be alone I am completely happy, can go where I choose and think about things I don't want to share, with no restriction, no necessity for making polite conversation with anyone I'm not eager to talk to. Nearly always I can come back from a long, solitary walk, or an hour shut in my room with a book, feeling much better and more prepared to be with people again. However, if I'm lonely, I long for human company and may wander about late at night looking for someone who's still awake, or deliberately go where I hope I may meet people I know. Sometimes, I don't want to talk over anything, but only to spend

a while with a person I like, playing cards, listening to music, or just sitting looking out the window. It's strange how knowing that we can be with no one; that there's not much chance of seeing others for a certain length of time, often makes the desire for companionship stronger than it would be otherwise.

At Harvard, I lived in an apartment with a girl who was also from another state, and I was very lonely at first, for I didn't know anyone else, nor did I know the town well enough to feel free to roam about and explore. Every time I turned a corner at night by myself, I had visions of the Mad Strangler, about whom I'd been so carefully warned, leaving me dead in the street. When we are lonely we magnify every experience, and the most casual incident becomes a deliberate slight or even a cause for fear. Perhaps a neighbour, meeting us in the hall and not answering a half-whispered greeting, can bruise our egos for an hour. And, of course, clerks and tradesmen are particularly unfriendly and derisive toward strangers—always *know* when someone's from out of town —can also be a cause of perturbation to one who is lonely.

My particular loneliness increased as I began to know my way around Cambridge, and started my classes at Harvard. Everyone else seemed to know someone else, while I felt completely an outsider. Several afternoons I sat studying in the Yard just to be around people, hoping I'd meet some of them. But no one spoke to me, so I just kept on reading, wondering if I were going to go through the whole summer this way. I walked about looking into people's faces—not to find an honest man, but to find an opening for acquaintance, a chance to say something to another person. I was trying too hard, and of course I was ignored. One night, my first weekend in Cambridge, was especially bad. It was warm and there was a full moon. My roommate had gone out and I was restless and unhappy. I sat for a long time on the porch steps of the apartment staring at the stars and listening to the leaves rustle, thinking how completely isolated I was, and wishing I were home, where I could talk with my family or phone a friend. I must have struck the nadir of loneliness that evening, and never afterwards did I feel it as poignantly, for it was then that I decided that instead of feeling sorry for myself and going about with a mournful face, I'd enjoy the opportunities I had to learn and see, and would not worry about other people. I still wanted to meet them, but if that was impossible, then I'd do what I could to interest myself, and be happy alone.

I started going to places I'd heard of because they were worth seeing, and listening to my professors with new interest in subject matter, not speculating on the possibilities in friendship of anyone sitting near or beside me. The change was amazing! Classmates began talking to me, and I couldn't cross the campus without speaking to someone; a boy next door asked me out, and I met many

of the students who lived near us. We always seemed to have visitors—especially when we wanted to study or sleep—and were often invited out. One boy even took it upon himself to check on our safety, and turned up at ridiculous hours of the night or morning. The difference was caused, I believe, by the fact that I stopped acting like the poor little girl who needs a friend, and began to behave like any other summer student, taking advantage of what the town and the school had to offer, and having a good time doing so. I felt much happier than before, and was, I know, much pleasanter to be with.

Presently, though, I began to look for chances to get away by myself for a while, because I missed the occasional periods of solitude we all need in order to remain human. Sometimes I went down to the Charles River and sat on a grassy bank in the sun where people often came to sleep or read, but almost no one ever talked. I also sat on the tombstones in the Old Burying Ground, or walked in unfamiliar sections of the town, but when friends found where I was going and wanted to go too, I couldn't refuse them. Now, I couldn't seem to find a way to be alone; either someone went with me wherever I went, or I'd meet someone on the way.

There is a quality about a person who is alone and enjoying it that makes others want to join him, and yet solitude is a condition that can't be shared. My roommate was taking French and liked to go to the language lab during the Harvard dinner hour, when it wasn't crowded. Sometimes I went with her, to sit under a tree in the cool of the evening; to read or think. Once, when I was settled under a good, big tree, absorbed in watching the squirrels and letting my thoughts stray, a strange girl sat down by me and began to talk, first about the squirrels, then about herself. She must have needed some release for her feelings, because she explained repeatedly that she had left Berkeley because the tremendous pressure and numerous suicides there made her so miserable, and then she asked intensely if I didn't think she had been right in leaving. I listened, but felt detached, almost intruded on by this stranger who wanted something from me I could not possibly begin to give her all at once. I felt almost like the wedding guest with the ancient mariner! Now I understood why people had met with indifference my searching, eager looks, and why at first I had no responses to my overtures. Loneliness is not attractive, and doesn't inspire the friendship the lonely individual craves, while a lone person, self-sufficient and self-contained, always draws people to him. The difference lies, I suppose, in the quality of the mutual exchanges which can or can not occur between persons in these two states of mind, and the people who surround them.

On The Beach

She stood
On the edge of the gulf
With bare feet in the foam
Of a wave that seconds before
Had covered her salty ankles.
A horsefly
Bit the nape of her neck
And its sting made her slap,
But, having hit only flesh,
She turned to look at the waves
Restless and changing.
She screamed, just to hear her voice,
But it was empty and hollow
Against the drumming
Constant sea.
With her left big toe
She wrote her name,
And then, not wanting
The waves to smooth it over,
Marred the letters
With her feet
And ran to join the others
Digging in the sand.

ROSE MITCHELL

Alone in Chatham

The clapboard sides of withered houses, gray
Against the endless webs of wooden spars
Beyond the wooden roofs, repeats yet bars
At once the memory of you the day
When we walked down the alleys by the quay,
And wandered into night and into stars.
Now this same sun-bright street is not what jars
My thoughts of you, but that you're gone away,
And this same hill and house are newly strange
To eyes that heart-looked past all things but one.
My wider sight was kinder than I knew,
For now your very absence makes the change
That freshens every sight I see alone,
And quickens careful looks that you outgrew.

CAROL COLE

Hugh Baby

Becky Ballentine

The screen door squeaked open, then banged shut, and heavy sneakered feet shuffled across the porch. Sitting on the living room floor, I lifted my eyes from my bridge hand to the doorway and stared at the grinning monster who stood there. At first glance all I could see was a barrel chest stuffed into a bright orange football jersey with number 48 splashed across it. But after a couple of quick blinks I realized that camouflaged in all the bulk, muscles and orange was a real boy about my own age.

"Here I am, girls!" he announced, spreading out his arms in welcome, and at the same time knocking over a table lamp. Ignoring the mess he'd made, he crossed the room, plopped down sideways in the most comfortable chair and swung his hairy legs over its arm.

"Just call me Hugh Baby," he said, casually, pulling off one of his sneakers and watching a fine stream of sand fall in a pile on the already sandy floor,—"I go to Clemson, and I play *football.*" Looking around the room triumphantly, as if expecting a round of applause, he was about to empty his other shoe on our floor when I stood up and stomped over to him.

"Now look, I don't care if you're King Tut, you're acting like a gorilla, busting in on our house party like this, wrecking lamps, and throwing your bulk around as if you owned the place! Now, would you kindly get up and leave right this minute?"

Hugh Baby stood up and looked down from his six-feet-three at my four-eleven, a mischievous gleam in his eyes.

"Okay, if that's the way you feel about it!" I turned to the other girls with a sigh of relief, then suddenly found myself being slung over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes and carried out the door.

"You put me down, you big ape!" I screamed, beating his back with my fists and kicking my feet. I shot a quick, menacing look at my companions who were unsympathetically collapsing with laughter.

"What's so funny? Don't just sit there—*do* something!" But my cries for help went unheeded, and Hugh Baby broke into a trot, chuckling all the time. I knew what was coming. Sure enough, the sandy beach and the wet ocean loomed ahead, and I was powerless. I could only scream and kick, which delighted him all the more, and made him run even faster. At the water's edge, I shut my eyes, grabbed my nose, and stiffened for the icy plunge. Then, much to my surprise, I felt myself set down gently, feet first, on the sand. Cautiously opening one eye, I saw Hugh Baby standing a safe distance away, his big hands on his hips, the wide grin still on his face.

"Fooled ya, didn't I, Little Bit? Huh! Huh!" he guffawed. "I wuz only teasin'. I'm a big tease. Y'ain't mad, are ya?" He widened his big, dumb eyes like a little boy who's been bad and is proud of it, but tries to avoid the consequences by looking innocent. Though I struggled to keep my face set in a stern frown of annoyance, I couldn't hold back the laughter.

"Well . . . I guess not. But I did think I was doomed there for a minute! And you gotta admit you were terribly obnoxious back at the house."

"Ob . . . what?" he asked.

"Oh, you know," I said, groaning inwardly that this "thing" before me was supposed to be a college student. "Repulsive, offensive . . . not exactly likable."

Finally catching on, he ducked his head sheepishly.

"I guess I didn't act too good, but I couldn't help it. Aw, you know—I play *football,* 'n I just ain't used to little squirts like you tellin' me what to do. Y'ain't really gonna be mad at me, are ya?"

Looking at his huge frame and simple face, I suddenly hit upon the perfect answer. "Not if you'll be our bouncer," I said.

"A bouncer? . . . Oh!—You mean like kick all the dates outta the house when it's gettin' too late, or keep big lugs like me from bargin' in on your house party?"

"Right!" I exclaimed.

"Well, Okay, baby! What're we waiting for?"

We both laughed, and as we turned to walk back to the house he flopped a big muscled arm around my shoulders and looked down at me, his round face beaming.

"Then you'll date me tonight?" he asked expectantly. Uh-oh! I hadn't thought of this angle, and quaked at the prospect of being alone with this Casanova footballer . . . at night! But to avoid the risk of hurting his feelings, I accepted.

That night the big monster again made his grand entrance, but this time with a more cordial welcome because of his new position. Just before we left, one of my friends slipped a fork into my hand and winked. "For protection," she whispered. "It's not much but it might come in handy. Even bouncers need to be bounced sometimes!"

I Am Running

I am running down the campus
I am running from chemistry labs and jello
I am running from a stagnant mail box
I am running in order to finish something
I never really started . . .

I am running up the campus
I am running for insurmountable knowledge
I am running for flowers at Burwell
I am running from my past
I am running for my future

I am running from the campus
I am running to an electric coffeepot
I am running in a flowered hat to a Woman's Club Tea
That starts at the church at two o'clock
I am running to nourish a seed
That will be the rebirth of the rebirth of wonder
I am running to take 1984's Thanksgiving Turkey
Out of the oven—unburned
I am running to a brick split-level somewhere
On Connecticut's fashionable east shore
I am running to break the Bread of Life.

JEANNIE SIMMS

Waking City

cars
stand
silently
waiting while the pigeons wuther off
in the distant
foggy
skyline
a cat slips by and hurries out of sight
faint remembrances of tombstones . . . shadows . . .
a honk . . .
and footsteps coming in and out of an all-night bar
where all is heard
and seen
and gone
a honk . . .
a taxi-driver yells out and
noises of passing trucks
subdue
and mellow
the sound
while a woman from a third-story window
leans out
to yell
to children now hurrying down the sidewalk
over yesterdays skate tracks

BEA UPSON

City Corner

What was it the old man said
To her as she hurried off in the crowd?
Perhaps some eagle sang or flapped majestic wings,
Yet it was hardly so.

He is left on the busy corner, throbbing in too heavy hope from
loneliness;
Watching gray stagnant rainwater lurk below the curb,
While just behind him Negro women cluster to wait for the bus.
They babble as a stale hot skin odor drifts
Among the passing people
Who bump, but never feel or hear
The secret source in one another
Like a whispering white stream,
Recalling its ancient origin
But no longer heard.

The city is full of unimportant noises
That, shrieking, drowned out
What an old man with factory-hard hands
Had tried
For one brief moment,
To hear
In a too pink lady
Who never
Knew he spoke.

BEA UPSON

Pop

Linda Folk

As Pop walked down the oak-shaded sidewalk, he sighed in the relief of getting away from the turmoil of his daughter's house. Julie was a good mother and housekeeper, but with five children running in and out of the house yelling "Momma" and "can I" and "where are" and throwing wet bathing suits down, ransacking for clean shorts, and sending their friends downstairs to the kitchen for cookies— no wonder Julie dreaded summertime! Although he loved the kids, thank goodness he had some place to get away to. As he stepped onto the sunny walk and felt the heat waves penetrate his clean, white tennis shoes, he could hear the *"whop, whop"* of tennis balls coming from the park. In spite of his shortened leg, he hastened his pace a little, and felt a trickle of perspiration run down his plump neck. "Better hurry 'fore they fill the courts!" he thought. "Sure do hope there's an extra player or two; my luck's been pretty poor lately. But, it's bound to pick up today. There ought'a be lots of people down there, even though it *is* hot. Usually a good breeze from the bayou gets to the courts anyway!"

He limped down the narrow, winding road to the tennis courts, and eagerly absorbed the day. Looking up at the creamy-white flowers that filled the many magnolia trees all over the park, Pop sucked in the delicious, lemon-scented fragrance and smiled to himself as he heard the voices of children in swimming, of motor boats humming over the bayou, and of the nearing calls of "15— love; 30— 15!" When he finally reached the bottom of three, long cement steps leading down to the courts, he looked around hopefully for anyone needing a partner. But they were three-fourths filled and no one was out, so Pop sat down, placed his worn but newly-strung racket beside him, and waited.

For three days, now, Pop had sat and summed up the good and bad points of each player. He had been quite a figure in white himself, and played in competition with some of the best: Bill Tilden, Bill Johnston, Vince Richards. Those were the days! Now he was a little pudgy around the middle, but he still had a strong right arm. He looked down at his tanned, freckled wrists and watched his muscles tighten as he grasped the handle of the racket. "Yes, it sure paid off to practice hitting against the garage every day. Good, strong stroke makes up for not getting around too fast any more."

From behind him Pop heard several bicycles ride over the gravel parking lot at the side of the tennis courts. He looked around to see Dowling, Tommy and Duffy ride up to the steps, their rackets stuck through the holes in their baskets, and their tennis ball cans rattling with each bounce of the bikes.

The boys looked over and saw Pop's round crinkly face smiling at them. "Oh, no,—he probably wants to play with us," one of them mumbled.

"Hi there, boys!" Pop called out. "All set for a big match today?"

"Yep, Pop; thought we'd play a little. You been playing already?"

"No, but it looks like ya'll might need an extra for doubles! Mind if I join you?"

"Well—eh—Pop, Robie's comin' down in a minute to make our fourth, and we're just gonna warm up till then. But if he doesn't come we'll get you! See ya later, Pop!" Dowling called, as they all bounded down the steps on their tan, gangly legs.

"Yeh, see ya later, boys," Pop softly answered. He slouched back into his place and squinted into the bright blue sky. "Sure could use a little of my help if they'd a mind to!" he added, to himself. Just then, feeling something nudge his arm, he turned to see a brown and white cocker staring up at him and wagging its whole rear end. A young girl, jumping down the steps after the dog, said to him, "Sorry if she bothered you, sir! She can only sit for so long, then she has to start walkin' again. But she sits less here at the tennis courts than anywhere else. I guess where there's people, she thinks she has to go meet them!"

"She didn't bother me at all, young lady; I like dogs. In fact, I used to train some during the war."

"Oh, really? . . . Aren't you Commander Evans?"

"Yes, but I've been retired for some years now."

"I thought I recognized you! Didn't you used to teach tennis at the Country Club?"

"Yes, I surely did. Did you take lessons from me?"

"No, sir, but my little sister did, and my brother, Mike, told me about playing down here with you. He said you have one of the best backhands he's ever seen, and he watches every tennis match around here and on T.V. too!"

"Oh, is Mike Burnett your brother? Fine boy! We play together often. He has a good strong stroke to him, and he's fast, too. Needs a little practice on his serve, but he's a good player. I enjoy playin' with him. Where is he today?"

"Out riding in the boat now,—but I think he said something about coming down here later."

"Yeh?—'bout what time you think he'll be here?"

"Probably pretty soon; he's been skiing and boat riding all morning."

"Got lots of energy, that boy. Used to be that way myself. Now with this leg I get tired pretty easily if I have to move around a lot. But I use'ta play all day if my partner didn't give out. Send Mike on down if you see him!"

"I certainly will, Commander Evans."

"Oh, you just call me Pop; everybody out here does. You don't happen to play tennis do you?"

"No, not very well, but I'll send Mike down if I see him. Nice to have talked with you!"

"Yeh,—enjoyed talking with you too, young lady."

He settled back in his seat for the second time, and scanned the water—the many small sailboats, motorboats, and skiers all over the bayou. He tried to pick out Mike, but the sun's reflection was too bright, and he was much too far away to see. "Sure would like to play with that boy today! He's a good boy, and listens to what I have to teach him. Knows how to hit that ball right to me so I don't have to move much. Yeh, he's a fine, good-natured boy. If he keeps playing in tournaments he might do things some day. Nothing's better than to play before a crowd, to feel their eyes on you, either backin' you or so much against you that you have to play an extra fine game to change their minds and win 'em over by skill. Think I'll wait awhile for Mike."

Pop leaned back again. Several other groups came to the courts, but they either had enough players or Pop did not know them. After an hour or more of eagerly waiting and asking to join games, Pop began to feel the intense heat of the sun and the breeze from the bayou seemed to die out entirely. "Guess Mike isn't coming today," he thought. People ignored the old man in tan trousers resting on the steps, and when he stood and walked away no one noticed his white-headed figure straining up the hill.

As he crossed the street, he heard through the silence of the afternoon the faraway drone of peoples' laughter and shouts, and the continuous hum of the motorboats. Then, coming toward him, he saw a tall, lanky boy in white shorts and shirt.

"Hi, Pop! Wanna play some tennis?"

"No, I'm tired by now."

"Well, see you tomorrow then!"

"Yeh, sure, Mike."

The Field

I sat in a field last night,
while the tree line faded into pink,
then lavender, then darkness.
New flowers saturated the air . . .
Staring up, I found nothing but darkness,
So I stooped to scratch a mosquito bite.
Afterwards I saw the first star; it
had come so quietly while I was scratching
my foot . . . that I missed its entry to the night.

CAROLE CAMERON

Mozart

Absolute music.
Music not from the mind;
Music not verbal;
Music not from the senses;
Music from that seclusion
Of no sight, no sound—
The essential being.
Music through which the artist's phantom
Runs wordless.
My spirit must follow fast,
Catching glimpses here and there
Fleeting, fragile, pure.
Music
Not screaming of tragedy,
Or joy, or hope, or majesty—
And overhearing his spirit in the creation,
I am led to my own.

We are one, the artist and I,
United in a crashing crescendo
Of sound.

MARY LOU POOT

Non-Semantics

Inspiration
Too often illuminates
The cloudy, primitive world
Of concept; a frail light
Too diffuse to focus into grammar,
Leaving you the exasperated feeling
That the mind is short-circuited
Somehow. No neat row
Of correct and proper wordage
Answers muster; only chaotic snatches of meaning
That dash here and there
And bump into one another,
Stirred up further by an unintelligible
Sign language of gesture.

A hopeless situation! One can only
Go home and study a thesaurus
While the light goes out.

MARY LOU POOT

A Proposal

Bea Upson

Often I have considered how nice it would be if we could just sit and think about doing things or going places and never really have to do them. It would be so much more enjoyable than going to all the trouble it takes actually to do something. And besides, the imagination almost always provides a much better product, situation or occasion, than the way anything really turns out to be. For instance, whenever I plan a trip I always get twice the pleasure out of just thinking what it will be like than the way it actually happens.

I suppose one of the first times I was impressed by the pleasure involved in an existence of merely thinking or talking about doing things, was when I was seven, and formed a strong attachment to Isabel, who was my age, and her mother. During the summer months especially, I'd spend most of the daylight hours at their house. The front of it was all pale marble, and you could tell it had once been very beautiful. After the Whiteheads bought it, though, they let it run down. Usually I'd get there before Izzie was up, and Mrs. Whitehead would always say that she'd be down soon anyway, so there was no hurry about waking her up. The fact was, Mrs. Whitehead (Julia, my mother calls her) loved to get anyone she could to sit and talk with her. When she wasn't upstairs in her bedroom reading, she was usually talking to Izzie and me.

One Saturday I went down there extra early. I wanted Izzie to go to Canada with my family and me the next week, and I thought I'd better be sure and ask her in time. When I got there she was still in bed, of course.

"MAR-vellous idea . . . simply WON-derful . . . Ooooh, I just think it is GRR-r-*and!*" I kind of twitched inside as I sat and smiled at Mrs. Whitehead, and watched her whitish-yellow hair being blown

in a frizzy halo by the fan in front of us. She was grinning, as usual. She always smiles broadly and gets real excited over anything you've just told her.

"Why, I know Isabel would just be DE-*lighted!* She will have FITS of excitement!" she said, drawing the words out long and slow. "Oooh, she'd just LOVE to go!" Only, I knew Izzie might not go when the time came.

About then Izzie bounded through the doorway still rubbing her eyes; straight dirty-blond hair covered the rest of her face. "Oooh, *B-e-e-e-zie!*" she squealed. With that, Mrs. Whitehead burst out laughing, and that set Izzie off, too. You never knew just when they were going to laugh, or what it was they were laughing at, but usually I ended up joining them. To those two everything seemed funny—like one time when Izzie forgot her doctor's appointment. All three of us were sitting in the living room talking, or something, and all of a sudden Izzie squeaked and drew up her shoulders like she'd done something she shouldn't have.

"Uuh-oh, I forgot all about going to the dentist yesterday." Her mother's eyebrows shot up into a bunch of wrinkles her forehead made.

"O o o o h — IS — a — *BEL!*" Then they both broke out laughing and leaned over, holding their stomachs while their faces grew red. Every few seconds they would take a quick break to look at each other, then, squeezing up their faces to the lines in the corners of their eyes, and looking like two mischievous children, they would laugh again.

"Poor Mr. Whitehead," my mother was always saying after talking to Julia on the phone,—"I just don't know *how* he puts up with that crazy household!" Sometimes this remark was brought on after she had just found out that Mrs. Whitehead couldn't come to the bridge club that afternoon, and sometimes for some other "irresponsible act", as mother would call it.

I'll never forget the morning Mother and Daddy went to pick Mr. and Mrs. Whitehead up to take them fishing, after Julia and mother had carefully planned the excursion for weeks. Both of them were still in bed, because Julia had forgotten all about the expedition, and hadn't mentioned it to Bill. She and Izzie still laugh about it, but mother didn't think it very funny—and still doesn't.

Anyway, so far as the Canada trip went, Izzie and I spent the whole week getting excited about going, and imagining what it would be like in Quebec. Then late on Friday afternoon when my family was out back loading the car to leave the next morning, Cornelia poked her head around the screen door: "O, Miss Beedie, one a' yor li'l girl frens wantch on da phone!"

That would be Izzie, I thought, calling to say she couldn't go to Canada after all, because her mother just had too much for her to do, or with some other over-used excuse. I walked calmly to the

phone, sorry that the hours of planning and thinking about the trip were over, and wondering what kind of souvenir I could bring back to make up for disappointment.

Such times with Izzie and her mother were the first of many other experiences which led me to the thought that perhaps there's a way we could re-do the world so we could spend all of our time merely thinking about doing things or going places. Yet I can't help wondering if everyone were like Izzie and Julia, just how men ever would have gotten anything done, and what we'd have to think about today if someone hadn't done something in the first place. What would the world be like now without Michelangelo's, and Edison's? We should neither have the Sistine ceiling, nor be able to see it at night!

Besides, if we are ever to try and rearrange the way men go about living, there are all those people who are just exactly the opposite of the Julia's to deal with. They spend most of their time doing things almost without thinking about them first, or seeming to do any planning at all. Some provision would have to be made for them, if it were ever to be found a profitable idea to arrange for a new scheme for the world. In fact, my sister Margie is kind of that way—always doing things without thinking. With her, this recklessness concerns small matters, while for others, the times of not needing to think before doing are much greater and more pertinent. Then, too, Margie often goes haywire. I remember how she used to do something like putting a stick of butter in the cabinet, where it would melt all over the cups and saucers, or a milk bottle still half-full in the back of the pantry shelf, where it would start smelling after about a week. And whenever we went off somewhere we'd probably arrive to find that Margie had forgotten to put her suitcase in, or if not that, would have left out her dress or shorts or something else as vital.

But, I suppose some arrangement could be made so that half of the world would be inhabited by those who choose only to do things and never think, while the other half was left free for those who just want to think and consider possibilities. That way everything would be solved, it seems to me, and people could spend all of their time devoted to the kind of existence they prefer. Progress could go on, with inventions and masterpieces still being turned out through cooperation. An idea would originate on one half of the world, and become a reality in action on the other half. The "thinking" half of the world could pass all its ideas on to the "doing" side, and thereby the thinkers would always provide the doers with something to do, and the doers would likewise provide the thinkers with something to think about. Neither side would ever have cause for anxiety. The element of time would be taken care of because one half of the world would live in the present, while the other half would live in the past and future.

Pretty soon, though, mankind would probably evolve into two entirely new races; one of huge musclely bodies dashing around, their tiny heads about the size of fifty-cent pieces, and the other with tremendous bulbous heads barely balanced on trembly stick bodies. And perhaps there is another drawback to my proposal. Wouldn't the "bodies" eventually outnumber the "heads" (if, by choice, they hadn't started out that way) because the heads would be able only to think about or contemplate reproduction, and then the very thought of it would spur the body half of the world into overpopulation? Before too long, the thinkers would all die out, leaving the world free to all those monstrous bodies running around, acting without thinking, and creating nothing but chaos.

So it seems that, after all, although indulgence in contemplation only is preferable to many, the unfavourable consequence of merely thinking and planning would, in the long run, far outweigh its pleasures.

Finis

Short within the twilight's breaking,
Cushioned under leaves of black,
Milky vapor slowly blending
With the purple now descending
Catches sunlight, throws it blindly,
Piercing through the core of night.

Fragments of forgotten planets,
Frenzied, brilliant baubles clash—
Through the thickness cuts a curtain
Pushing earthward rich and certain;
Smothers steeples in its foldings,
Covering the day-dim light.

CAROL COLE

Goodbye, Jamie

Susan Hales

Ma never told us—my brother Tom and me—why Jamie had to leave. He'd been staying for almost two years in the old shack Pa used to keep tools in. He could have lived in the big house with us, but he said he didn't want to because he was just hired help and not like Tom and me. He said we belonged in the house and he belonged in the shack—and that was that.

For a long time he wouldn't even eat with us. Ma used to fix him a plate and get one of us to take it to him. But he did eat with us on Christmas. He said Christmas was different and was a time when nobody should be alone. Ma even hung a stocking on the mantel for him. And when he took out the scarf Ma had knitted for him, he said he hoped that someday he could give *us* something. Then when Pa said it didn't matter, Jamie got all mad and started crying, "It just isn't fair! It just isn't fair!" He ran outside and we could still hear him shouting. It scared Tom and me. Ma looked over at Pa and shook her head.

The next day Tom said he didn't want to go to the shack to see Jamie. He said he might'a turned into a crazy man. I surely didn't want to go by myself, so the two of us sat on our bed and looked out the window at the shack and wondered if he was ever coming out again. He did—pretty soon, too. I punched Tom in the ribs and said, "He don't look loony to me!"

We ran downstairs and let Jamie in the house. He really was an all right fellow. He picked us both up—one in each arm—and turned around and around until we both were laughing so hard we had tears in our eyes. Pa came to the door and laughed, too, when he saw how funny we looked. Later on, after Jamie had gone back to the shack, Pa said how good Jamie had been to us since he'd been here. He was always whittling things for Tom and me with his knife. Once he made us a boat. It floated, too, but we didn't want

the water to ruin it so we always kept it on the window sill in our room.

The last couple of months he was with us he took us fishing and hunting, and once even to the picture show in the city. I remember how he didn't want to go because he had to use Pa's truck and he said it just wasn't right. But Pa told him how upset we'd be if we didn't get to go, and Jamie decided it would be okay just that one time. We had no idea Jamie would ever leave. Everything was so wonderful. Having Jamie around the farm was like having a big brother.

The man who came to get Jamie the day he left knew all about him, and he was so kind of old, Tom and I thought he might be Jamie's pa. They didn't shake hands, though, and Jamie looked real sick when Pa called him into the house. Pa sent us upstairs and said he surely was glad Ma wasn't home. From our window we saw Jamie and the man go into the shack. They didn't come out for a long time, but when they did, Jamie was carrying that beat-up looking suitcase he had the first day he came to our house. I looked at Tom and Tom looked at me, and I knew he wasn't going to say anything because he had that dumb look on his face that he had the night Jamie acted so crazy.

"Gol-ly, Tom, he's *leaving!* We can't sit here and watch him go without saying *anything!* You're just little, though, so it won't matter maybe if you don't go, but I've *got* to."

I ran downstairs and out in the yard. Jamie and the man were already down the road a way, but I knew I could catch them if I tried, so I started running after them.

"Wait! Jamie, *please* wait!" He stopped then. I kept running and pretty soon I caught up with him, and he picked me up just like he always did.

"Don't you *like* us, Jamie? Aren't you going to say *goodbye?* Please don't go, Jamie! *Please!*" He didn't say anything—not one word. He just put me down and pushed my hair out of my eyes and started walking down the road again.

"Goodbye, Jamie. Goodbye, Jamie! Bye. *Bye!*" I must have looked real crazy standing there in the middle of the road crying and yelling goodbye to somebody who wouldn't even turn around and wave.

Like I said before, Ma never did tell us why Jamie left. But once when Tom said Jamie must've been a crazy man to just up and go the way he did, Ma told him not to ever say that again, because Jamie really loved us. Then she took us in her room and told us the wonderful sewing machine she had was what Jamie had given her the night before he went away.

Tides

Curved from the climax of Cape Fear to Georgetown Jetties
the great visible and empty scythe of sand lies firming
beneath the breakers. Carried by the wind the spume
obscures its meeting with the shore, this threshold
changeable and sere where nothing blooms but sea-bones,
shells and rotting weed.
A shark washed up here yesterday. I waded in the surf and
helped him up the beach, his skin hard and rough beneath
my hands, and left him gasping there in the faint file
of the wind, the dry grains blowing against his mouth.
A shrimper passed before he washed ashore. He may have hugged
its nets too closely. Or another shark drawn by all that
ocean life caught in the tobacco-colored nets may have
driven him toward shallow water. There were wounds upon
his fins and belly. Wounds his own teeth might fit.
Surely this is the world's end where each statement of the tide
leaves so much casual death reminding us so unobtrusively
of our own impermanence.
Across this grey water came the first colonists. Perhaps their
shallops beached here, exploring the empty coast. The
tide washed in as hungrily the breakers roar when grey
light lets you see them white against descending darkness,
the high tide and the evening coinciding.
Steeply the dunes drop off against the level strand scrubbed
smooth and sloping to the point where now I walk a hundred
yards beyond the last wave's splashing line. Six feet of
water then flowed here, will flow again.

PAUL B. NEWMAN

Charleston

Jacqueline Poitou

A locust shrieks nearby.
In the yellow waters of a lazy river
Remain the memories
Of grandeur gone.

We had left the house quite early on a Friday morning, and the fresh wind brought us a smell of seaweeds and pine trees perfectly harmonized with the spirit of adventure that had inspired this two-day trip to Charleston, when Bill wanted to show me his home town. From place to place, large patches of red clay brought some interest to the flat empty landscape which characterizes the southern part of North Carolina. To compensate for the monotony of the long straightforward ribbon of the road, Bill recounted some memories of his native city. Every word was a revelation of his profound attachment to the dear charming town which had been described to me as a place of peace and decayed glamour, the refuge of the old aristocratic families of French immigrants. Charleston! I almost expected to meet Scarlett and Melanie. I wished there were still horses in the streets. But Bill drove the new car full speed, and from time to time, a bunch of slender pine trees accentuated the desolation of a shabby wooden house given up to the chronic discouragement of its coloured inhabitants. Sometimes, on the front porch (or passively collapsed on some ruined sofa outside), a dark skinned Mammy was smoking—a monstrous figure, with her look of nowhere. Sometimes I noticed the unconscious placidity of a live oak, dominating a space of flat ground burnt by the unmerciful sun.

Surprisingly in such a desert, a cotton mill appeared. We stopped, and Bill asked the manager to let me take a sprig of cotton. Great bales were already stacked there, ready to be loaded and sent to the factories. A large smile appeared on the manager's tanned face when Bill introduced me. He greeted us cheerfully, and seemed to rejoice in meeting someone from Paris!

As we left behind us the glowing metallic roof of the cotton mill, we met on the road a big, black, long-winged bird. "What *is* it, Bill?" It was as large as an eagle, but looked different. "Just a vulture," replied Bill. Was he kidding? To me, vultures were the birds you saw only in the movies about African safaris!

Passing the state limit, we entered South Carolina. Gradually, an exotic landscape had replaced the wide emptiness. High pine trees bordered the winding road as we approached the swamps. The light was dimmed by the matted veils of dove-grey moss, which hung softly balancing from the high branches. A great solemnity and a sort of religious sense of hidden life emanated from the stagnant black waters in which the trees grew. The dry earth of the cotton fields had now turned into a greasy mud. The muffled sound of aquatic life filled the air, and the visible birds seemed to hold back their cries, as if they were afraid to break the oppressed stillness of the place. A charm, a spell seemed over us too, and we remained silent. But soon Bill began recalling episodes of his childhood, and I imagined him as a child, trapping animals, exploring swamps, spying on boats, or hiding in the grass like a Seminole, crawling from a sandhill to another under the harsh fire of the sun. I could almost feel the hot sand under my bare feet, and hear the persistent music of lazy waves on the shore.

After a few more moments of congenial conversation, Charleston finally appeared, announced by the powerful silhouette of a light grey cruiser, emerging from a sea of yellow grass—Charleston, that had lost its importance as a harbour because of the sandbars that had slowly formed and prevented the passage of boats. We passed over a long metallic bridge, strangely curved over the river, then came in sight of a long beach, bunches of gracile palm trees, and then of the negro slums which characterize these southern towns more than anything else: wooden half-collapsing houses, and idle negroes, wandering in the warm streets. Bill explained to me the old negro custom of painting the outside of the windows and doors to neutralize the evil spirits which might go through them, entering

or leaving the houses. After passing the public slave market, where slaves were sold at auction to plantation owners, we reached a section of white houses which reminded me very much of charming resort towns of the French riviera, and then the picturesque row of coloured houses which leads to the waterfront. We walked along past gay facades, happily coloured in pastel tones, and therefore called Rainbow Row. Half sunk in the ocean, the red sun burned his last flames over the glittering horizon. Night was falling over Charleston, and the palm trees now appeared in black against a purple background, as we silently strolled along the battery. Nobody on the waterfront. The city was quiet, almost submerged in a deadly stillness. Stiffly, two figures passed us. Under a streetlamp, I distinguished their old fashioned blue-grey uniforms. "They are from the Citadel, and they don't like Charleston too much. You see, there are no girls around here. They don't know what to do for the weekends." And indeed, they did look quite idle and aimless! Bill felt sorry for them and so did I.

On our left, the water; on our right, the cannons of the Battery, rigidly pointed in the direction of Fort Sumter, miles across the water. Then three steps and the elegant empty street, with its black coaches shining under the thin light of the streetlamp, parked at the door of the white aristocratic housefronts. Only the rhythmical surge of the ocean broke the silence. In the warmth of the evening, the refreshing whisper of a fountain drew us to a green patio enclosed behind an intricate piece of ironwork, and there we stayed a long time, enraptured by the gracious marble Cupid emerging from luminous running water; delighted with the lively music of the fountain.

The city of Charleston with its closed houses and coloured walls, the picturesqueness of its stone-paved streets, their restful quietness! A welcome contrast to the chaos of the modern suburbia gave them a Mediterranean quality, a diffuse resemblance to the old parts of the French and Italian Rivieras. Then, too, Charleston appeared to be a stagnant city, a dead vestige of past prosperity; a charming refuge of aristocratic conservatism and refusal to change; an island of immobility in a country of unending alteration.

Star Island

Jacqueline Poitou

No cloud above the island
A Mozart concerto
    blew in the wind
The clarinet
Longed for a piano
To share the joy
The rocks were burnt white
    like the lightfire
The distant bell
The mourning cries
    of the sea gulls
No line to separate
    the ocean and the sky
No distinction either
    between the "You" and "I".

Sitting with June at the rear of the embarkation, I contemplated the trail of white foam still connecting us with the coast of New Hampshire, almost invisible now. The steamer had left Portsmouth an hour ago, transporting some thirty persons of all ages, sexes, and origins, to Star Island, one of the smallest of the Isles of Shoals, on the Atlantic coast, North of Boston. I had the chance to be with a young couple, members of a Unitarian Fellowship from New Jersey, who invited me to join their community for a week of complete freedom and Biblical simplicity on the island.

A kind of joyful complicity seemed to link all the passengers, after the loading of heterogenious luggage preceding departure itself. A sweet old lady, shy and charming as a little girl, sat beside me. She had the furtive look of a frightened mouse, yet of such candor, with her round, narrow brimmed, silver spectacles, that I could not help smiling encouragingly at her. Stealthily, she smiled back, and suddenly resolute, whispered: "I love to travel by boat,

but only when there is not too much wind!" Effectively, the boat rolled and pitched on the waves, reminding me of my recent trip from Europe on the *Ryndam*—six days of constant tossing between the water and the sky.

"Have you ever been to Star Island?" As the time passed, everyone seemed more and more excited. From what I could hear all around me, the island seemed to be a place of great enjoyment and satisfaction, for a contagious animation reigned among us, that reached its climax when the piercing voice of a little boy announced: "I see it, *I see it!*"

Far away, a black spot hardly distinguishable grew bigger and bigger as we went nearer, and soon I could discern the white of the Unitarian Chapel. A few minutes later we reached the narrow pier, and impatiently began to stream to shore. But after so many enthusiastic comments about it, my first impression of the island was rather disappointing! The ocean, and the wide sky just above, and, lost in their immensity, the grey rocks on which grew a scanty grass swept by the wild, untamed winds—no other signs of human life could I see than an old wooden "Hotel," colourless, exposed to the inclemencies of a rough climate, and the little white stone-built chapel, proudly standing on a bump of ground, and defying the obstinate attacks of time and the natural elements.

Now I could not help wondering what could be the interest and enjoyment of an eight-day stay in such a desolate place, with a group of complete strangers. I felt lost, trapped and frustrated! But, forming a slow procession, we arrived like pilgrims at the hotel, where the total lack of comfort made warmer the congeniality of the couple who received us in the wide hall. Supplied with his room number and name tag, everyone disappeared to the privacy of his own unpacking. The sound of a rusty bell soon gathered us all again, for a copious dinner, and after a few warnings about the risk of fire, which was naturally increased by constant winds, and the rarity of running water on the island, I left the hotel for a lonely exploration before nightfall. I sat for a long meditation on the shore, and watched the island sink into the oblivion of darkness, lulled by the doleful sound of the chapel bell.

On the following days, I gradually discovered the numerous and unsuspected charms of a life conceived and organized to let everyone enjoy complete freedom, while providing opportunities to share with others in any activity he enjoyed most. Anyone interested in music could join the singing lesson, given after lunch by an enthusiastic young man called Jim. One morning, as I went over a waltz by Chopin, on the piano, a student came to me and simply asked me to join him in the interpretation of a Mozart concerto for clarinet, so I followed him to the chapel, where he kept his

instrument. His simplicity, his tranquil assurance, did not astonish me as much as the great subtilty and ease of his performance. I had never felt such an understanding, such a facility for communication between me and a stranger! How many hours we afterwards spent on the hard rocks, blessed by the harsh caress of a glowing sunfire tempered by the wind; explaining our countries, our way of life to each other, absorbed in endless talks, in the silent contemplation of the sea! Every night as I lay again between the rough sheets that scratched my sunburnt shoulders, it seemed to me that I was discovering the real meaning of this small community and my place in it. Every meal gave me the opportunity to make new acquaintances, fascinating sometimes, like the young medical scientist who had spent two years in Japan, and was doing research on the actual consequences of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

But most of all I enjoyed the varied resources of the sea, the polar bear dip in the icy ocean, before a comfortable breakfast; the fishing party, and the early departure at five o'clock, half asleep, in the wet morning air; the long expectancy and the pleasure of feeling the line pulled to the bottom of the sea; the disappointing looseness when the astute fish had succeeded in eating the bait while avoiding the hook; the light veil of pink light invading the horizon, and the rise of the red sun from the rim of the water. One evening, we lighted a fire on the rocks. In the stillness of the tepid night, the stars were more luminous than the burning sparkles shooting from flames, where we shared a smell of roasted marshmallows, and chanted old campfire songs.

After a week of such congenial company, the pilgrimage to the chapel the last night of our stay seemed to acquire for us all a profound meaning of essential fraternity. We had lived through simple but rewarding experiences; shared the same discomforts, known the same joys. While in the fog the uncertain lights of lanterns flickered, I was both thankful and sad to think this was our last night together. I knew already that I could never forget that peaceful small island, near the windy coast of New Hampshire.

At Gayhead

From where we sat it seemed to me,
At least three hundred feet of clean
Rough rock rose upright into air.
In scarlet and in gold it stood,
And brighter than reflected light
On glaring green-blue water near
The shadowed shore beside the cliff.
The stone, I thought, could not be cool—
Not cool with all the color that
Had seemed to bake a warmth into
Those rigid walls of hardened sand.
Perhaps just here along the side,
Perhaps a touch to feel what sea
And wind had smoothed, but oh, the chill
Of hand on stone, when fingers reach
Out wanting heat instead of cold!
Then maybe all this rock is only gray,
I thought, and maybe I'm alone
In seeing brightness here, and so
I cried out—Do you see it?—Do you?
And can you see the yellow and the red?
But they turned round and told me how they wished
They'd thought to bring the ham and cheese and bread.

CAROL COLE

Pheasants

Martha Winders

Daddy was sitting in his worn easy chair reading the newspaper, his dark red hair shining in the lamplight. I was halfway studying, and thinking about turning on the television set for while I did my geography, when I glanced over at him. He was smiling, his eyes filled with a satisfied glint of devilment—the same look he got when he broke his diet and snitched another cookie for dessert when Mama wasn't looking.

"What are you reading?" I asked inquisitively.

He suddenly looked more serious. "Well," he began in his decision-making tone, with a tinge of gaiety accidently creeping in. "You know how much you've been talking about a new pet for an Easter present. I was just noticing in the paper an advertisement for pheasants. How about a pet pheasant?"

"Oh, Daddy!"—I jumped up, knocking the geography book on the floor "—when can we get it?"

He smiled as he got up. "I'll call the man right now, and maybe we can go out late tomorrow afternoon and see what he has."

"Oh, thank you, thank you! Now maybe I can go out and gather eggs, and they can have babies and everything!" I ran to tell Mama, and Daddy went to phone.

Next day we drove out to see the pheasants. The man who sold them was lean and weathered, but looked straight at us with his keen blue eyes. He and Daddy talked awhile.

"I ain't got no pheasants to sell but the silver 'uns," he said.

I ran to find them by reading the names on their cages. I passed the Chinese Golden Cock, with his bright yellow breast and golden crest, and the Hooded Amherst Pheasant, before I came to the Silver cock. He turned his head to the side and stared. His white back was delicately marked with black and matched his velvet breast and topknot. Brilliant red wattles hung on the sides of his face, and his yellow legs were armed with two-inch spurs.

"Yep," the man said to Mama and Daddy as they came up, "these silver 'uns is awful nice. They be the friendliest 'uns. My daughter had one would foller 'er round the yard! They ain't like them Reeves. See the brown speckeldy 'uns over there? They is mean as they can be!" He spat, and I crinkled my nose as I watched the spit soak into the ground.

"I shore hate to part with 'um though. My daughter and wife, they like these here 'uns."

Mama and I went down the hill to look at the rest of the birds, and when we came back the man was putting the cock and two brown Silver hens into an orange crate.

"Are we getting *three?*" I asked.

"I thought we ought to start off with a family," Daddy said, winking.

I scrubbed the floor of the large wooden furniture box that made one end of the old pigeon cage, and swept the dirt yard that was enclosed by chicken wire. After setting up water and feed trays, I let the pheasants loose in the cage and watched them pace along the wire, hop up into the box, and nervously step into the feed and water trays. Then I ran to the house to get Peter, my older brother.

"Look!" I said as we walked up to the cage, "guess what I've named them!"

"What?"

"The tallest and fattest brown one, the one there with the calm eyes, is Becky. She's my favorite! The skinny one is Rachel, and the cock is Beethoven! Don't you like them?" He grinned, and folded his lanky body into a stooped position to look closer. "Yeah, they're nice," he said,—"now come on stupid,—time for supper!"

By the end of the first week, I had coaxed Becky to eat out of my hand, and she ran to the door and followed me around the cage when I went in. But late one afternoon, as I was getting ready to feed the birds, Becky kept sitting quietly in a corner of the box and didn't come to the door. I stopped and looked at her. Her back was arched and strained, her neck stuck out, and her beak parted as if she were panting. I tiptoed round to the side of the fence and bent down to watch her. Her eyes were rolling nervously. She picked up her tail feathers, her muscles grew tense, she shook slightly, and then a small beige egg rolled across the floor of the box, dropped off and started downhill. I ran around and caught the

warm egg, screaming, "Becky laid an egg! Becky laid an egg! Mama, Mama, come here quick! Becky laid an *egg!*" I tried to congratulate Becky and show her what she'd done, but she seemed completely uninterested, as did Beethoven, who I thought should act the proud father.

I met Mama coming up the hill. "Mama, look,—feel how warm it is! Promise not to say anything to Daddy until I tell him. I bet he'll be surprised!"

"Fine!" She examined the egg. "It's a shame captive pheasants won't sit on their eggs. Wouldn't it be fun to raise some chicks?" she asked, as we went down to the house.

I decided to put the egg on the mantel in the den to see if Daddy noticed it before I told him. When he finally got home, I met him at the door and followed him around until he settled himself in his arm chair in the den and unfolded the paper.

"Daddy, don't you notice anything different?" He looked at me carefully.

"You've had your hair cut?" he asked.

"No!"

"New outfit?"

"Oh, Daddy, no! I mean, anything different in the room!"

He looked around for what seemed a long time. "Yes," he said, "there's an egg on the mantel!"

"And guess where it came from!"

"A chicken."

"Oh, Daddy," I cried desperately.

"The refrigerator!"

"No . . . Becky laid an egg!"

He looked blank. "Who is Becky?"

"Daddy! My favorite pheasant!"

"Oh," he smiled, "—well isn't that something! Let's see it."

I got the egg and handed it to him gently.

"Well sir," he said, "that really is a nice one. When did you find it?"

"I *saw* her lay it this afternoon," I answered, "and it was still warm when I picked it up!"

"Well!" he said contentedly, "that's fine. We can have pheasant eggs for breakfast now."

"Daddy!" I screamed. "There's a little baby pheasant in there! You can't *kill* it!"

"Supper's ready! Go wash hands!" Mama called as she came in from the next room, and smiled broadly at Daddy and then at me.

The next night Daddy came in with a big box, and put it down in the kitchen.

"Golly, Daddy! What did you get?" I asked impatiently.

He slowly opened the box, and took out a round grey metal thing that looked like a large dishpan with another pan turned upside

down on top of it. "What is it?" I asked, peering through a little hole in the top.

"It's an incubator," Mama said. "Now we can hatch the eggs."

"Oh, boy! Oh, *thank* you!"

"But," Daddy said, "some of the pheasants we raise we'll have to eat. We'll keep them separate from the rest, and won't eat any of your pets, but if we spend money on more cages and food and all, there's really no sense in having pheasants unless we eat some. Don't you think?"

"I guess that's okay," I agreed, "just so we don't eat any of my pets."

"Now," Daddy took a paperback book out of his pocket. "The eggs hatch in about twenty-one days from the time you put them in, and since pheasants lay eggs every other day, the book says to save the eggs until you get about ten, and then put them in. You turn the eggs about four times a day, or the chicks will be born with crooked feet. Another important thing to remember is to always keep water in the incubator. If you don't, the membrane inside the shell dries out and gets too tough for the chick to get through when it hatches."

"Can I put this egg in now to practice on?" I asked.

Mama and Daddy raised their eyebrows at each other, and then they both nodded.

Everything went along the way the book said. Becky laid every other day, and Rachel started laying spasmodically on alternate days with Becky. Because the pheasant man had a "going out of business" sale, our pheasant population increased, and Daddy bought a pair of Golden Pheasants, a pair of Amherst Pheasants, and six Reeves pheasant eggs.

I was too impatient to save up eggs, so I put them in the incubator as soon as I found them. As the time came nearer for the first one to hatch, I rushed home from school every day for lunch, to check. Every morning I left saying, "Mama, please, if it starts to hatch, help him out if you see he can't make it!"

Finally one morning a tiny hole had been pecked in the shell, and I could see the chick moving inside. "Mama, don't you think I should stay home today?" I asked hopefully. "This will be *educational,* and the chick might need me, and I want to be here!"

She hesitated, "I think I can handle everything," she said. "You can see what's happened at lunch time. I guess you ought to go, but I'll call you if everything isn't all right."

Reluctantly, I left. Mama was sitting in the chair by the incubator in her pajamas. When I got home for lunch, she was still sitting there in her pajamas.

"My heavens, is it lunch time already?" she asked. "You watch, while I fix you something. I've been sitting here not knowing when

to help him and when not to. He struggles and struggles and then lies there and breathes so hard! I think that last part that breaks away from the shell is the umbilical artery, and I was afraid he'd bleed to death if I did anything more."

I looked in and saw part of a shell with the skinny head and one foot of a wet brown chick sticking out. His eyes were closed, and large ear holes looked out of proportion on his bony head. The beak was gaping and a tiny white egg tooth was attached to his upper beak.

"He looks sick!" I gasped.

"Maybe I ought to call the vet," Mama called from the kitchen, "and ask whether or not to help, and ask him how long they usually take to get out."

The bird twisted, the leg stuck further out and another piece of shell broke off, showing where the wing joined the body. He pushed and turned again, jerked quickly, and then the eggshell turned over, making the foot rest on the bottom of the incubator, and the head and neck lie extended on the floor. The bird lay there gasping. I tried to choke down a sandwich mother had brought. We both looked through the hole.

"He's worn out!" Mama exclaimed, "but he's sure come a long way. Think I ought to wait another hour before I call the vet?"

"I guess so. I gotta go. I think I'm late now, but maybe if he gets too tired you'd better help him."

"Yes,—if I can *tell* when he's too tired!"

When I got home Mama was dressed and smiling. "Go look!" she said. In the incubator stood a fluffy, brown chick. He was peeping and looking around as I stared through the hole.

"He got out just a little while after you left," Mama said.

"He's so much smaller than a baby chicken! Look at him preen his feathers! Can we take him out now?"

"It said in the book to take them out when they're dry, and by now he must be!"

We set up a box in the den with a heat lamp over it, and fixed some mashed up egg yolk and water for the chick to eat. He practically ran around the box on his long legs, and after I put water on his beak and tried to get him to peck at food, he learned to eat and drink.

Two mornings later another egg was pipped, and the chick hatched safely after another day of watching. The older one pecked the new one when we put them in the box together, so we had to fix a separate box. The eggs I put in instead of saving them now hatched every other day, and by the time it got warm enough to keep the chicks outside, we had set up fifteen boxes around the house, each with one chick in it, of slightly different age from the others.

Finally we moved Becky, Rachel, and Beethoven to a larger cage

Daddy had built. I made Becky a place to lay her eggs under an old half of an oil drum, and started leaving the eggs there when she laid them. Sure enough, even though the manual said that pheasants had never been known to raise young in captivity, Becky started sitting on her eggs. She wouldn't eat out of my hand any more. Every time I went in she puffed out her feathers like an overgrown, cold sparrow, and then gave a hiss and growling cackle and rushed at my feet.

One morning, I found that the light in the incubator had gone off during the night. I took about five of the eggs and put them under Becky. When one of the eggs hatched a week later, Becky seemed frustrated. A new chick, named Junior, was running around, but she still had to sit on the rest of the eggs. Junior could run right through the chicken wire, and I spent most afternoons chasing him back into the cage so a cat or dog wouldn't get him. When the chicks started hatching every other day, Becky got a wild look in her eyes, and ran at anything that was put in the cage that wasn't usually there. She got thinner than Rachel, and even after the babies grew up and were put into different cages, she seemed nervous and jumpy.

But I was happy. As each egg hatched, I found some characteristic of the new chick that was different from all the others. Each was talked about and named personally. Then one night Daddy was sitting at his desk when I walked in.

"Come here a minute!" he called. "You know, since all of these pheasants have gotten to be your pets, and it doesn't look like we'll get to eat any, I want to show you something." He pointed to a tablet, and went over all of the figures on it, explaining carefully how much the wire, lumber and piping for cages, feed and water trays, cleaning materials, incubator, books,—not to speak of the birds themselves—had cost. "It looks like it's just too expensive to keep any birds if we're not going to eat them. I got a letter from a man in North Carolina today, who raises pheasants as a hobby. He offers a good price for the whole lot, and it looks like the best thing to do is sell."

"Will *he* eat them?" I asked.

"No. He just raises them for a hobby."

"I guess it's okay, then," I said. "I'm sorry you didn't get to eat any Daddy, but. . . ."

"That's all right." He smiled and turned red. "I had a pet calf once that they told me was mine. I kept care of it, and one morning when I went out they were taking it to be butchered."

"Did they kill it?"

"Yeah, but we had raised it for food. Anyway, we should ship the pheasants Saturday. I'll call the man and tell him."

Saturday morning came cold and rainy, after a week of dreary days. Daddy went to a meeting, and Mama, Peter and I put on

boots, jackets, and raincoats, and each carrying a butterfly net or a fish net, or orange crates, sloshed up the hill. We stood by the fence looking at the wet birds and the muddy pens.

Pete grinned. "I never realized those spurs were so huge. That big Silver—no, let *me* get him!—look at the size of that boy!"

Beethoven flew up on top of a long low shed in his cage, and fixed his yellow eyes on Peter, who moved through the gate, Mama and I following. I held a butterfly net, and Mama set the crate down in the middle of the cage, and started trying to catch Rachel. Peter, with the net held behind him, stalked Beethoven. Beethoven turned his head to the side, and watched Pete come nearer and nearer, jumped off the shed, and paced up and down the fence. I went with Pete to try to corner him. Finally, after he dodged and flew around the cage several times, we trapped him in a corner. Pete threw the net over him. "Hey!" he cried. Beethoven's wings weren't under the net, and were beating the mud, splashing it up in Pete's face. "Hey, help me!"

"You have mud on your *teeth!*" I giggled.

"Damn it, Martha! Don't just stand there! *Get* something, and hold his wings down!" Pete shouted, spitting mud out with each word. He scared me when he cussed, so I closed my eyes, turned my head, took a deep breath, and squatting down felt around on the bird until I found the flapping wings, and held them. Peter took the wings and folded them in against Beethoven's body, then picked him up, and blushed and grinned at me.

"Sorry I yelled at you, stupid," he said.

"Sorry I laughed," I replied. "But I wish you could see yourself in a mirror!—Look!" I cried. Mama was kneeling with a net over Rachel.

"I have her now!" she called, peering over her shoulder at us. Rachel's wings suddenly got loose, and she struggled. Mama lost her balance, and sat down in the mud as she grabbed Rachel up to her chest, pressed her lips together, and at the same time tried to shield her face from flapping wings. I ran over and held the wings down, and took the bird from Mama. Peter was trying to get Beethoven into the crate without getting spurred. Mama closed the crate lid as Peter slipped Beethoven in, and got another crate for Rachel. The rain started again, and we all looked at each other solemnly. "Eleven more pheasants in open cages!" Mama said. Finally after much slipping and falling we got all of the birds crated and to the railroad station. I told them each good-bye, and explained that everything was for their own good.

Just as we got home, the sun came out and Daddy drove in. "What on earth has happened to you all?" he asked with amazement, as he met us on the back porch. We glared at him, and finally Pete broke the silence: "Ever tried to catch a pheasant in the rain?"

Alone, content...

Alone, content,
The child bent
To let wet sand
Drip from her hand,
Build trees so tall
They would not fall.
She dreamed a maid
Her trees would shade:
Young, but old
Enough to hold
A blossom tucked
And gently plucked
From high above
By one she'd love.
A rising tide
Washed off one side
Of her best tree:
Now she could see
The water churn
The sand and spurn
Her dream, and so
She didn't know
Whether to stay
Or run away.
(A mother-voice
Gave her no choice.)

JUDY WOOD

Dilema

¿Quién soy? Pues, no sé.
Dos culturas en mi se funden
Dos almas en constante fricción
Dos ideales para entenderse
¿Quién soy? Pues, no sé.

¿Quién soy? Pues, no sé.
Terror en la noche, niña que llora
¿Por qué, mamá, por qué?
No nos quieren aquí?
¿Quién soy? Pues, no sé.

¿Quién soy? Pues, no sé.
En Cuba extranjera, en el norte también.
¿Cubana? Rubia en la escuela.
¿Americana? ¡Habla inglés bien! ¿no crees?
¿Quién soy? Pues, no sé.

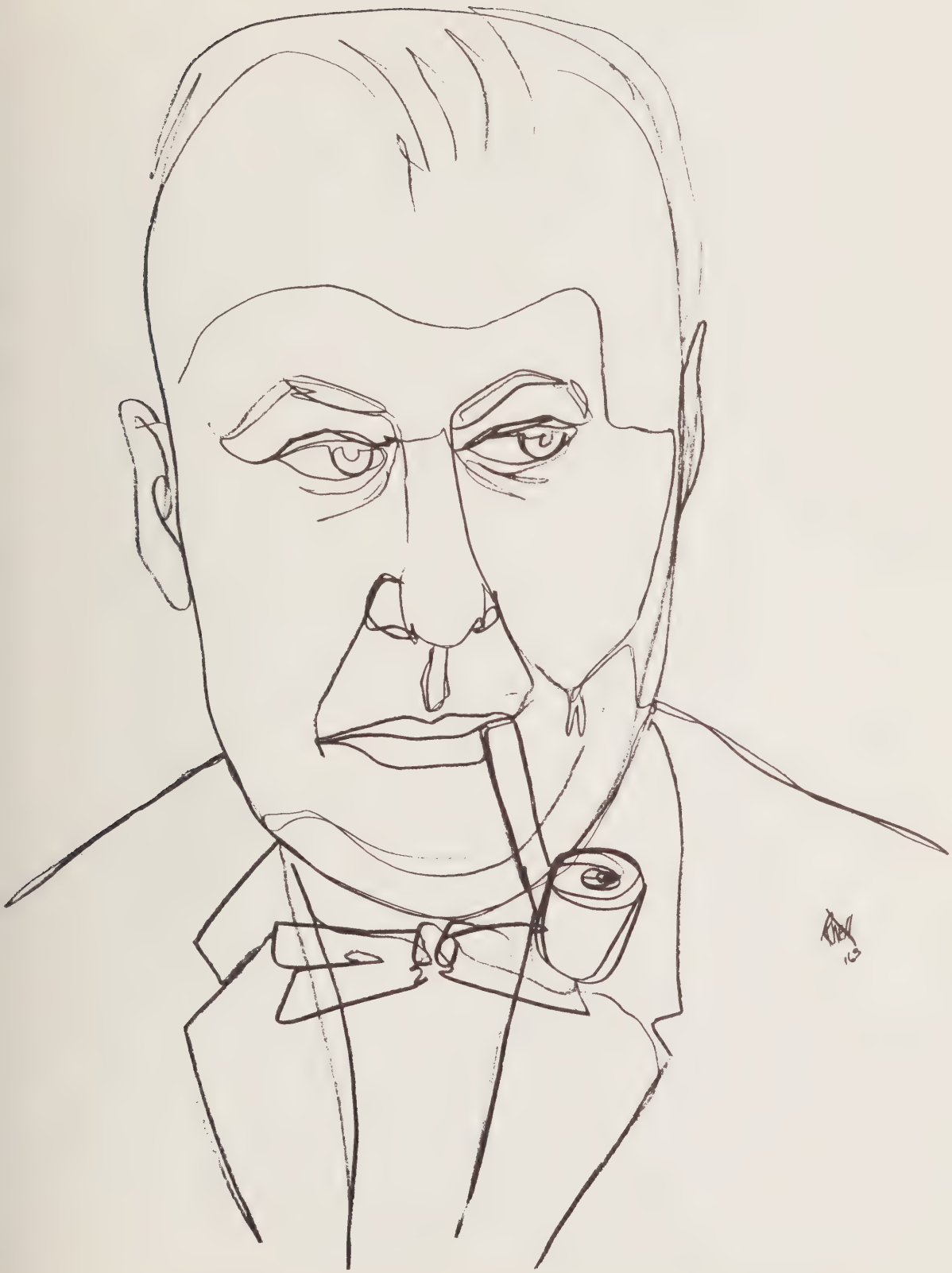
¿Quién soy? Pues, no sé.
Yo. Nosotras. ¿a quién me refiero?
Entre las dos, ¿cuál de las dos prefiero?
¿Soy quien soy?
Pues . . . no sé.

MARJORIE T. KIRBY

Un suspiro

Cuba, mi tierra nativa
Que a mis ojos soñolientos
Trae recuerdos gozosos de mi niñez.
Tu suelo teñido de la sangre de tus hijos
Es anhelado por muchos, que como yo
Ven reflejadas en la pantalla de la mente,
Calles, playas y casas, que jamás volverán a ver
Y nada por ti pueden hacer,
Sino palabras sin eco, sin entendimiento.

MARJORIE T. KIRBY



On The Dunes

Rose Mitchell

I can almost feel the heat of the midday sun at Dune Allen, blazing on brown backs, and hear children squealing as they touch the hot sand with bare feet. Then, I remember the cool six o'clocks when we would take long walks, crawling up the dunes and tumbling down, rolling over and over in the sand until we looked like fish covered with flour and ready for the skillet. We'd get back to the cottage in time for supper, and sometimes eat in a hurry and run back two blocks to the beach, so we could have a last look at the gulf before dark. We could chase crabs as they scurried into the water, or just sit quietly on a dune with the sea wheat tickling our legs, and the wind tossing our hair.

The largest dune on the beach went almost straight up on one side, and was higher than a two-story house. At its base lay a small fresh-water lake, and my sister and brother and I delighted in taking pieces of cardboard, climbing to the top of this dune, and whizzing down into the water. By the end of summer, we could slide frontwards, backwards, kneeling, and riding double. Once, after an exhausting ride, my sister and I didn't have the energy to climb back up, and decided instead to walk around the lake, to a part of it covered with thick reeds. We thought this place deliciously dangerous, because of the rumors about a large unfriendly alligator who lived there. Our legs sank up to the calves in gray muck, and every time we moved, the water clouded.

I was ahead of Ree, when she suddenly screamed and dug her cold little fingers into my arm. "It's him, it's *him!*" she cried, and I didn't even look. We fairly skimmed the water, bumping into each other and stumbling in the mud. Both of us finally scrambled to shore, and lay there panting a minute.

When Ree could talk, it was with short breathy phrases: "Oh, I saw him,—I did! He was long and green, and . . . he was watching us, and ohhh . . ."

"How big was he?"

"He was bigger'n both of us put together!"

My fear was changing to curiosity, and I sat up a little. "Let's go find him again!" I said confidently, knowing that Ree would never agree to such a thing.

"No, no, no,"—she shook her head and gulped. "He'll eat us alive . . . I promise he will . . . he looked so *hungry,* and his teeth were shining, and . . . no-siree! I'm going back to the house, and you better go too!"

"Okay, okay, but listen . . . we don't even have to *get* in the water. Let's just walk along the shore until we see him . . . and if you don't come, then I won't believe there's any such thing as that ol' alligator!"

"Oh, yes there is!" Ree said indignantly, and we started back. To avoid the water, we had to walk in some weeds, and step lightly, watching for stumps and cockleburs. Soon we reached a place where we should have been able to see the alligator. The reeds were parted for one five-foot stretch, and Ree pointed to this, whispering: "He's in there, I think." We stood motionless, watching the water, but nothing stirred.

Soon I got tired of waiting and threw a clam into the reeds. It landed with a clunk. A few mosquitoes hummed, but nothing else happened.

"Well, he's sure not a very brave alligator, but we'll make him come out!" We ran to a nearby boathouse and borrowed a couple of fishing poles. With these in our hands, we felt much more adventurous, and began to wade in the water, beating the reeds and screaming: "Come out, you chicken!"

Within five feet of the spot we started jabbing at the water with our poles. They both struck something solid, and we both screamed. All of a sudden, Ree yelled: "That's no *gator,* it's a boat!" Sure enough, there in front of us was the dark hull of a half sunken rowboat. We grabbed the sides and began to pull. There was a low, sucking sound of mud around the stern, but the boat held fast. Now it was getting dark, so we left for supper, vowing to keep the boat a secret, and to go back the next morning.

We were at the lake with a rope, seining net, and shovel, by eight the next day, and in an hour we had the boat on shore. It was covered with slimy green algae, and hundreds and thousands of

barnacles. Ree put her hands on her hips and stood back in admiration. "What'll we call her? . . . Oh, I have it . . . *Tubby Sinkums,*" she laughed.

We spent the next week redoing Tubby; scraping away the barnacles, and patching up the holes with some of Daddy's putty. On the day of the launching, we were up early, and stopped by the boathouse for paddles. After a struggle, we got her in the water. Ree sat in the bow, and I gave a great push forward, jumping in just as we drifted from shore. Things went smoothly for several yards, and then we slowly came to a halt. I began to paddle hard, but didn't get anywhere. Something wet and oozy around my toes made me look down, and to my horror there was half an inch of water around my feet.

"Ree," I said irritably, "quit splashing, or we'll sink!"

"But, it isn't *me* . . . ," she protested. Before the sentence was out, Tubby began to turn slowly in a circle, and the water in the bottom got higher. We tried to bail, but the boat just kept turning faster and faster. Soon, we couldn't ignore the little slurping noises coming from the leaks.

"Let's get out of here!" We were both over the side, and swimming to safety. Once on shore, neither of us spoke. We just stood there watching Tubby go down until only the two wooden paddles were left floating.

Ree's voice began to break: "All that work for nothing, and we'll *never* get her out again!"

I tried to comfort her. "Never mind. We shouldn't have trusted that leaky ol' boat anyway. Let's go play on the dunes; at least *they'll* never sink!"

So we decided to forget *Tubby Sinkums,* and raced off to find our brother on the tallest of the dunes. For the rest of the summer we played on these mounds of sand. We knew exactly the best jumping dunes, the safest hiding place, and where the unusual plants could be found. July passed quickly, August came, and then the day we had to leave Dune Allen.

The next summer seemed ages coming. Winter days I longed for the gulf and the sand, and thought that surely I'd never get back there. But at last we did set off for the beach again. As we drove down the long dirt road leading to the cottage, everyone craned forward, trying to be the first to see the dunes.

We came to the crest of a hill, and just at that moment of expectation, I heard a gasp, and felt the car slow down. I blinked, thinking that what I saw was only in my head. The dunes had been leveled for miles, and in their place was an asphalt highway. A sick, numb feeling crossed my stomach, and I felt as if a part of me had been jerked away forever.

Water

I stood not knowing how long it had been,
Still barefoot on the rock;
And all the woods seemed pouring water, oceans,
Almost still, but moving with unsettled shadows.
And the wind was blowing the late sun
Through the quivering shades of green,
Until it seemed as though I were becoming green,
All green,
And the trees brushed a dry, low hum.

A moment ago, or so it seemed, I had stood
Anchored in firm anguished separation,
Alone on the rock, while my too heavy hands and flesh
Seemed bulged and full of hot, stiff-beating rainwater,
Causing commotion in a form far too defined.
I watched the cool movement just below my feet
Until the stub grass banks, and stones, and all were gone
But water, calmly and then swiftly
Showing rock go underneath,
Or getting caught
And falling to the side.
And as I stared below the surface
Wanting to feel, and know, and be its waterness
The cool flow seemed fresh, smooth
And lunging always with slight spray echoes,
But yet staying there.
And a bare, light green chiffon blew
All around
And lifted me to psychic weightlessness,
So that the air passed soft,
Hush, hushing
Like water over water.
And I was water
Watching the trickle and eddies until they seemed almost
To vanish,
Or be something I could no longer recognize.

I hung, as on a thousand silver threads,
While all that was not flesh or water
Became one, in me.

BEA UPSON

Glucksritter

My life is of a drifting kind
I have no home or root—
I'm lifted, driven by the wind,
Or wander, free of foot.
My ringing at the door is strange
For I'm a guest, and where
I come, I stay, am gone again—
No imprint on a chair.
The things I think I want the most
I most disdain to keep;
Unhappy then, a fretful ghost,
Unwillingly I sleep.
Though turn and go, I've paid the cost,
And now look back I will,
To see in sunlit, shifting dust
My image, vague, yet still.

MARNEY COLLINS

Triolet: Mimosa

Today they cut down the mimosa tree
Which blossomed every spring against the wall;
Our yard is where a parking lot will be.
Today they cut down the mimosa tree.
Morning will pass to noon and cool iced tea
Without its long blue shadow there to fall;
Today they cut down the mimosa tree
Which blossomed every spring against the wall.

MARNEY COLLINS

Snow

Elizabeth Kerr

The church bells chimed midnight. All day it had been raining, but now the light drizzle was turning into a blurry snow. Alone, with a Black Watch wool scarf over my head and the collar of my polo coat turned up, I left the church to begin my long walk home. The last low chords of the organ playing the final hymn could still be heard. But here, where the snow fell, a small new world was created around me.

In the midst of this nebulous world I merely watched. The snow would first settle on the treetops, then filter its way down through a mass of dark lower branches. After the snow had found every branch and given each a strip of white coating, the groups of trees made me think of a herd of zebras huddled together against some unknown danger. The flakes fell in a dizzying rotation all around me, and as they landed on a sleek, glossy pond off to my left, melted. Others were forming soft white lids on the grimy trash cans in back of a beer tavern.

A young girl walked by me, the snow caught in her thick eyelashes. Farther down the street, a beggar sat on the curb with his shoulders bent forward. The snow fell silently about him and transformed the expression of his aged, grooved face into something like that of a child when he runs out the back door and into his imagination.

At home now and in my bed I waited, but felt too shut off from the world outside for sleep. Snuggling in the big patchwork quilt that had been a part of my room for sixteen years, I looked out of the window I had opened just a little. The air sent a shiver through me, and I hugged my knees tightly.

As the minutes passed, the intensity of the storm increased. The wind screamed as it ripped mercilessly at the barren, desolate treetops. But closer to earth these cries became low, mystical voices that chanted in an arbitrary language only the branches could intercept. Occasionally the moon's milky sphere appeared, but was quickly returned to oblivion, behind an infinity of snowflakes.

Suddenly these flakes became fewer and fewer; the wind was gone, cutting an icy path toward the North. All that was left was silence, cold and penetrating. I looked more closely into this vacant world of mine which the snow had draped in its abstruse veil, and saw what I had never seen before. All was equal now, and quiet.

I had always noticed the icicles glistening in the sunlight, and the star tracks birds left behind them in the snow. I remembered how I liked the crunchy sound snow made when I walked on it. But tonight was different, and now took on special meaning. I wanted to believe that I was the only person awake—that only I had been so intently noticing the white universe that God had created without saying a word! Another shiver went through me. I fell asleep feeling as you do when your best friend has told you a wonderful secret, and you've promised not to tell.

The Water Lily

Jane Cotter

We lay silently side by side on the dock, staring into the water, the hot summer sun beating down on our backs. A water lily floated slowly over from the neighboring swamp, and we followed its course with our eyes. I saw it as a rare and lovely blossom; he saw it only as an ordinary flower. Suddenly he stood up impatiently and lowered himself into the water. I followed as quietly as possible so I wouldn't break the spell. The water lily drifted toward us. For the first time, I noticed that it was less than perfect—even dying. He leaned out and pushed it toward me as one child shoves a ball to another. "There," he said simply. I reached hopefully for it, but as my fingers touched its petals it fell apart. He laughed knowingly, and I smiled, trying to keep back the tears.

And Then There Were None

They say her name's Ismene.
Hear tell she had a sad life.
Small wonder she ended up here.

You would too if your mother and sister
killed themselves
And your brothers killed each other in a
knife fight.

Make's a body wonder what the world's comin' to.
You can't open a paper but what somebody's up and shot
somebody else.

Hush, here she comes.

Mornin' Miss Ismene, glad to see you out
so bright and early!
Thank you, Nurse Brown, it's good to be here.

You know, she looks right normal.
I guess you never can tell what's going on inside a body.

CAROLINE DILLON

Louis

Mary Margaret Rogan

Everybody knows that Louis is the best yard man in town. He gets to pick the people he works for, and expects a good meal at noon. All year he wears long-sleeved plaid shirts and khaki pants, and in cold weather he puts on a tattered gray coat. During one winter we tried to get him some corduroy pants, but "No'm, I don't want no corduroys. Make too much noise when I walk." A silver watch chain hangs from his belt, and on it he shows off a Canadian penny. He doesn't know exactly what it is, except that it's no ordinary penny. He wears an old felt hat, a size too large, with the brim turned down, and never seems to take it off except to eat. I always thought he was too self-conscious to take it off, because his head is egg-shaped, completely bald, and shines like polished light mahogany next to his darker, worn face which usually needs a shave. If you look closely you can see where his whiskers begin to curl. A few bits of gray show in his straggly mustache. When he laughs he shows that his upper front teeth are broken off close to the gums and nothing is left but little black stubs. We try to get him to see about them, but he says, "I'm goin' to, come spring," or I'm goin' to, come winter."

Louis is a part time preacher for the Church of God in Christ and House of Prayer, and likes nothing better than to be called Reverend Hale. One hot summer day he came into the kitchen to get a drink. He turned the water on and waited for it to run cold, then looked at me and said, "Did you know towards the end of time you'd come in here and turn yo' water on and it'd run pure blood?"

"How do you know that?" I asked, for he always wanted to argue his beliefs.

"Says so in the Bible—says so in the Bible. And you know what else is gon' happen towards the end of time? The mothers and fathers is gon' eat their children. The mothers is gon' eat the daughters and the fathers is gon' eat the sons." He paused for a minute, looking down at his feet thoughtfully. "I sho' hope I'll done be gone by then," he said slowly. Then another thought struck him. "An' I'll tell you somethin' else. If ya take the mark of the beast, ya cain't buy ner sell, and ya'll starve to death!"

"What kind of beast, Louis?" I asked.

"Nobody knows—nobody knows. But a beast is gon' come and he'll ask ya to take his mark. Some people'll wear it in their hands so's they can hide it, and some people'll wear it on their foreheads. If I took it I'd wear it on my forehead, wouldn't you? But if ya take the mark ya cain't git into the kingdom. Only the righteous can enter the kingdom.

He shook his head slowly and a drop of perspiration ran down the side of his face and zigzagged when it hit his rough whiskers, "Sho' 'nuff. I hope I'm not aroun' then!"

Winter

Winter is snow dust
drifting from corner to corner
covering barren ground;
hiding mistakes and regrets,
and yet
postponing new thoughts
like budding branches frozen intact

ELIZABETH EARLE

The Visit

Mary Margaret Rogan

"Jeannie Graves?" called Mrs. Chase a second time, annoyed at the interruption of her rapid run through the roll. "Does anyone know where Jeannie is?" Charlie Sanders answered from the back of the room. "Somebody said on the bus this morning her father died last night. He had a heart attack, I think."

"Oh, I am *so* sorry," she said, and for a minute she permitted the low hum that filled the classroom. "Class, we must send flowers to Jeannie and her family! Barbara, will you see about taking up money to send some flowers? And now, Jean will have the morning devotional."

I looked across the room and caught Nancy's eye—Nancy was my best friend. *She* wasn't listening to the devotional either. I

guessed everybody else had already forgotten about Jeannie. Nobody knew much about her except that she missed school a lot to take care of her eight brothers and sisters. She was a little girl with dark eyes and black hair. The colors in her clothes didn't go together; sometimes she'd wear stripes and plaids together, or two different kinds of plaids, and her skirts were always too long. Nancy and I only knew Jeannie because we, too, packed our lunches and ate with her on the bleachers in the gym. Everybody else went to the cafeteria. She really wasn't as quiet as she seemed, when you got to know her. She always had something funny to say, and kept us laughing.

With the news of her father's death I thought that Jeannie would have to miss more school than ever, now, to help take care of that large family. And I remembered the time she had come to school frightened and crying, and confided in us that her father had gone home drunk the night before and got mad at her mother—even tried to beat her—in front of all the children, too! I wondered if he had been like that very often, and if he had, how Jeannie really felt now about his going. When the bell rang I hurried over to talk to Nancy.

"You know what, Nancy? I think we ought to go see Jeannie after school."

"Ye-aaahh!" she exclaimed slowly, her eyes widening. "I was trying to think of what we could do for her, and that's *it*."

"Good! I'll meet you at the locker."

Jeannie lived up behind an old lumber mill. A crooked dirt road full of holes and tire ruts led to the house, and as we climbed up the hill, what had seemed such a good idea that morning began to scare us a little.

"You know, I've never been to see anybody that's had a *death* in the family!" said Nancy, nervously.

"Me either. Gosh—I wonder what you say?"

"Do you think we should go?" Nancy asked. "Maybe Jeannie won't feel like seeing anybody, and she might not even want us to see where she lives."

"Well, as long as we've come this far, we might as well go ahead —I guess."

"Yeah," she agreed reluctantly.

Breathing heavily from our climb, we reached a little brown shingle house behind a clump of trees, and hard to see until you got near to it. Just as we walked into the yard two little boys came from around the side of the house and stared silently at us. They looked like Jeannie, and their black eyes had the same expression in them.

"Uh—where's Jeannie?" Nancy asked. Still staring, one of them pointed with dirty fingers to the house.

"Well, let's go," she said, with determination, and we went up the rickety steps to the door and knocked.

A young girl opened the door, probably one of Jeannie's sisters. She didn't say anything, but stepped back for us to come in. The room was dark, and it seemed like a long time we stood blinking our eyes there before we could see. We smelled the strong odor of people closed up in a small room. Then we began to notice the people in the room looking at us with the same silent curiosity as the two little boys in the yard. A woman in a rocking chair moaned softly; another woman bent over to comfort her. I thought that must be Mrs. Graves. Nobody spoke to us, and the many eyes still stared as if to say, "what are *you* here for?"

Then we saw Jeannie sitting in a corner by herself, and started hesitantly over to her. She looked as if she had been crying, and when she saw us she leaned down and covered her face with her hands, sobbing loudly. Nancy and I looked at each other helplessly. When she quieted down a little I said self-consciously, "Jeannie, we were awfully sorry to hear about your Daddy." That started her crying again, but she got up and put her arms around us and managed to get out "I thank ya'll fer comin.' " She couldn't say any more, but ran out of the room, and there was nothing left for us to do but make our way back to the door, still feeling the staring eyes behind us.

Going down the hill we were quiet. I wondered what we could have been scared about before, and thought how it was too bad that more people didn't know Jeannie, and how she had loved her father anyway, no matter what he was like.

The Race

Carol Cole

"Corinne! Corinne Frugoni,—for Pete's sake, bring your boat to the dock and stop fooling around out there! What are you doing, anyway?"

"I dropped my glasses overboard!", she yelled back.

I shook my head and looked around to see if Mimi had come down yet, but I didn't see her. When I turned back toward the water Corinne had maneuvered the small boat around several of the mooring blocks and was heading for the corner of the dock.

"All right, Corinne,—come about and I'll catch you. Let's *go!* Do it *now* or you'll miss the dock entirely!" She swung the tiller toward the sail and headed into the wind a little too late, so I grabbed the shroud and pulled the boat alongside.

"This is the second pair of glasses you've lost in a month!" I said, as she climbed out. "Do you have any idea how deep it is out there?"

"No. Well, about eight feet, I *guess.*" I looked at her and smiled. She was one of the older girls, about fourteen, and a little tall for her age—taller than me, in fact. She was squinting because she couldn't see, and her upper lip almost touched her nose, so that her teeth looked very large. Her short dark hair was wet and blown straight back against her head, and her clothes were soaked from water splashing over the side of the boat. For a moment I saw her

as an oversized mole, with braces. She looked at her feet, back at me, grinned and squinted again.

"Corinne, what will your mother say when you write her that you've lost another pair of glasses?"

"Oh, I don't know," she shrugged, "She won't like it so much, but I've still got my dark ones!"

"All right, go on up to your cabin and change clothes. I'll ask Kathy to send a swimmer out to dive for them."

I was standing on a floating dock with aluminum poles on each side, so I tied her boat to one of them and let the sails down. Corinne walked back up the pier slowly and carefully, and as I glanced after her I saw that Mimi was on her way down. I felt better knowing for sure she was coming, but being in charge of the kids even with Mimi there didn't help my headache any. When she was halfway down the pier I called to the other boats:

"Make your moorings, but don't take your sails down yet; we *may* have another race!"

The four larger boats not being used were still moored about fifty yards from the dock. The wind was gusty today, and when the halyard-chips banged against the sail tracks on the mast, it sounded like the echo of pipes being hit together. Sometimes late at night you could hear the same sound from the cabins near the water.

"Hi! Where's Bonnie?" Mimi said, as she checked her stopwatch and put her stuff down.

"I don't know; she didn't show up. Hey, what do you think of this wind?—too gusty?"

"No, it's good for them! How's it going—how many races so far?"

"Only two . . . Kathy Wheatley lost her outhaul in the first one, and came back, and Corinne just dropped another pair of glasses overboard."

Mimi looked up, smiling broadly. "That's the second time this month!"

"Yes, I know, but maybe we can get these back." I cupped my hands close to my mouth and called across the water to the other dock where Kathy was watching some girls in swimming. She finally looked up when I shouted to her to please send a swimmer out to dive for the glasses, if she could. Shading her eyes with her hand she looked out over the water to where I pointed, but motioned that it was too deep.

I nodded and sat down, and fingered my stopwatch. By the grin on her face, Mimi was still thinking about the glasses. I licked my finger, stuck it up in the air to check the wind direction, and absently wiped it off on my jeans.

"Mimi, what about the next race?"

"Oh, I don't know; what do you think? You've been down here all afternoon—"

"Well, it's gusty, and Bonnie's not here; you think we could just call it off?"

"Let's see . . . what time did you start—two? It's four now; that means we could probably run a short one and put the boats to bed by five. Are there any kids down here to raise the flags?"

"Candy and Susan, on the end of the pier."

"Okay, call the boats in and let's get this thing over with!"

I used the megaphone again, "All right, we're going to run another race; bring your boats to the dock and we'll give you the course!"

Mimi was busily figuring something on a piece of scrap paper attached to her clipboard, so I called Susan and Candy out to the dock. Both of them were about twelve or thirteen, and sauntered along as though they couldn't have been more bored. I wondered if they were at the age when things aren't worth doing unless there are at least five or six other people doing them with you.

"Listen, you two have been drafted for the race committee; come on over here, and I'll show you about the flags." There were three flags, so I went into a lengthy explanation about which flag went up, —all the time wondering why in the world we bothered to use them, since the boats probably couldn't see them anyway. "Now," I went on, "these flags are very important, and you have to be careful to get the right ones up at the right times—have you got it all straight?" They nodded and began to attach the white flag.

I glanced back at the boats. There were only four out there now, with Corinne's still tied to the pole. The wind was picking up, and I felt sorry for the skippers. I had never liked racing in rough weather myself. They were circling the moorings with some difficulty, waiting to be called in, so I waved my arm, and one by one they started for the dock.

Mimi stood up with her clipboard and gave each one the course as she sailed close by: "Take all markers to starboard; finish the same way you started."

When they all had the course straight, she took up the megaphone: "All right,—prepare for five minutes!"

"I wonder if Margie Cummings will come in last again? She's been last four out of six times this month," I said.

Mimi looked up, "Ready on the whistle?"

"Ready."

I blew five times, we clicked our stopwatches on, and the white flag went up. I smiled at the girls, "Okay, get ready with the blue and red flags, now." They gave me an irritated look and went on with what they were doing.

"Wind's picked up a little, Mimi."

"It's still not too bad—what's the matter,—you scared?" She grinned and made a teasing face.

"Well, thought *they* might be," and I motioned toward the tiny boats, which were sailing close together now, getting ready for the start.

"Look, they'll be all right; I wouldn't let them go if it were *too* bad. No one's having any trouble. Just sit down and be glad you're not out there getting soaked!"

I sat down and she grinned again. "Been a rough day, huh?"

Mimi always seemed to have everything under control, and I never could figure out people like that. She was older than I was, though, and had been a counselor several times before. This year she was the head sailing counselor, and had put Bonnie and me in charge of the races.

"Well, just the usual, I guess, but it kind of makes me mad that Bonnie didn't show up. I've had a headache all day, and—you know, the kids get on your nerves after awhile!"

"Yes I know, but after all . . . it's your *job*. Hey! Are you ready for the start?—almost time!"

I called through the megaphone, "Prepare for thirty seconds!" and blew the whistle, then peered out across the water to the small red starting buoy. The boats were crowded together like four cars at a stoplight.The starting flag went up, and as they crossed the line I clicked my stopwatch off and slipped a sweatshirt over my head.

"Hey," Mimi said, poking my arm, "Why don't you go on back and take a nap? I can handle the results all right."

I watched the boats for a moment and nodded my head, "Okay. Listen,—thanks, Mimi—sure you don't mind?"

"Positive. Really, go on up and lie down, and I'll see you at supper —how's that?"

"Thanks, Mimi. See you later." When I reached the end of the pier, I picked up my shoes, stuck my clipboard under my arm, and started up the hill. It wasn't a long walk because the cabins weren't far from the water. Sometimes I thought I'd go out of my mind if I didn't get away from the noise, and the boats, and the campers, just for an hour each day—but there was never time, and as Mimi said, it *was* my job. I laughed to myself when I remembered how I had thought the job would be when I took it. But all the same I knew when we left I would feel a little sad, and begin to gloss over the parts of the summer I disliked, so that by the time I got home

nothing would seem as much fun as camp, and I'd be ready to go right back there. But at the moment I was fed up, and wanted nothing more than to sleep and forget about kids, and boats, and responsibility, job or no job!

I had an hour and a half before supper—an hour and a half just to lie in bed! It had been a full day, three periods of sailing in the morning, a counselors' meeting during rest hour, and then those races in the afternoon. There was no one in the cabin when I got there; the kids were still at their activities, and Phyllis hadn't come back from the craft shop yet. So I lay still and listened to the children playing on the tennis courts, and wondered again if Margie Cummings would come in last. Now I made a mental note to ask her if she needed help on her racing starts, and closed my eyes. But I guess I knew even before I heard the cabin door open that there really was no way to get away—that I was stuck.

I didn't move, hoping whoever it was would think I was asleep and either leave, or get in their bunks and go to sleep too. But they didn't leave; they walked over to my bunk and stood there whispering to each other until I finally rolled over to see who it was.

"Okay, gang, what's up? Did you lose something, or do you just like to go around waking up the counselors?" It was Marcia and Buffy, two of the younger girls from another cabin. They were standing close together by the side of my bunk in bathing suits and sweaters.

Marcia finally gasped out, "Well, Lisa was busy and Bonnie was doing some charts and Mimi said if we found someone to watch us maybe we could pass rowing today before supper!"

I looked at the bed and back at the children. They didn't say anything, but just stood still and watched me. Marcia was the shortest little girl in camp, and Buffy was only an inch taller. Neither of them could have climbed into a top bunk; I wondered if they were even big enough to handle the lightest oars.

"All right, group," I laughed, though I knew they didn't understand, "let's see how you do!" Buffy had picked up my stop-watch and was clicking it on and off while I tied my shoelaces.

"You know, Buffy, you can *have* one of those when you get to be a skipper!" I said, and ruffled her hair slightly. I picked up my clipboard as we left the cabin, gave both of them an affectionate spank, and we started downhill. They ran ahead to get the boats, and I waved to Mimi as I reached the pier. When I got to the dock she laughed and said, "Just won't let you alone, huh?"

"Nope!" I said,—"guess there ain't no way!"

"Well, anyhow," she said, trying to act as if it should make up for everything, "looks like Margie Cummings is going to finish second!" I turned around to check on Marcia and Buffy in the rowboats, then glanced back at Mimi, and we both laughed.

To Spring

Grass, green with tendrils long and wet
In mounds and piles fresh cut is set.
The flowers bloom, and then the bees
Hum joyously among the trees.
'Tis spring, tra la, and all are gay—
But those who have a fever: hay.

For them the blooms are only blight
And bees another hideous sight,
Foretelling in their noisy glee
The opening of misery.
'Tis spring, tra la, and all are gay—
But those who have a fever: hay.

First come the sniffles and the sneezes,
Then follow swiftly coughs and wheezes.
Out come the Kleenex and the pills
And steadily mounting doctor bills.
'Tis spring, tra la, and all are gay—
But those who have a fever: hay.

"This cannot last long," says the reason.
"We're bound to have another season!"
Flowers fade and the nose is quiet
After its annual springtime riot.
But spring, tra la—O curse the day
For those of us with fever: hay!

ELLEN BARRIER

The Conversation

Judy Wood

We covered his radio and the leftover lunch with my orange beach towel before we started walking toward the quiet end of the shore. I suppose most people, especially the New Jersey tourists that we call "snowbirds," would think any part of our beach is quiet, since I have never seen there more than two or three other couples, or families, or high schoolers, at one time. It is a narrow strip of hard, cream-white sand, even at low tide, that we have to reach by pushing through scratchy bushes and sandspurs growing on the dunes along the highway. Not many people know about it, I guess.

This morning we laughed even more than usual. The sky was a cloudless jigsaw puzzle blue, and the sun beamed directly on my eyelids and shoulders. We drew a huge hopscotch pattern and played until my muscles were worn out from jumping over man-sized squares, and I had to give up. Big, meaty crabs scrambled to get back in the ocean after waves had pushed them out into the sunlight, and we grabbed our extra towels and chased them. I learned to lift them from behind so that their claws struck out madly but couldn't reach me. We found a thick bed of coquinas, and almost filled a paper cup with those we'd caught by scooping faster than they could bury themselves. The waves were taller even than he was, so I jumped them alone, while he swam out to deeper water, till I wanted to leave the sucking undertow and the crashing waves, to sit by myself on the towel.

We must have walked, then, for a mile without talking much. I kicked the piles of foam that still topped the moist sand until fast waves brought new foam, and lapped and stung my legs. While he skipped flat shells over a smooth moment of water, I anchored my feet in soft sand and twisted until I was buried up to my ankles. I squinted up at the sun to watch the gliding patterns of the seagulls; I stooped to turn over a dead horseshoe crab or pick up shells, usually a Baby's Cradle or a Chinese Hat.

Then I broke the silence. "Have you ever found a shark's tooth? On the beach, I mean?"

"Of course I have,—haven't you?"

"Uh, no. I mean, well, it's been years since I have. I don't even remember them. What do they look like, anyway?"

"They're just black and shaped sort of like a triangle." He looked at me now.

"Umm. How big are they, and all that? About like this?" I held my hands about five inches apart.

"Are you serious?" I laughed that nervous, high, fakey-sounding laugh I hate. "I thought you said you'd found them before!"

"Well, it's been *years* since I have. You mean they aren't that big?" I didn't pause long enough for him to answer. "You haven't seen any today, have you?"

"No, I haven't seen any today. Why?"

"No reason. Just wondered." I couldn't think of what else to say, so we walked along some more without talking. I peered back, but I could see no spot of the orange of my towel, and all the dunes looked alike from there. I know we must have walked at least a mile, though, without talking much at all. That really puts a strain on a person.

"I heard about this lady the other day who was riding on a bus and all, and this dirty nigger man came up and sat right next to her and tried to light his cigarette from the one she was smoking. I just thought that was *awful,*—don't you?"

"Yea, I guess it was. Where'd you hear that?"

"Oh, just from some lady somewhere the other day. And I thought it was *awful!* What would *you* do? I mean, if you had a wife and all and some old man came up and did that to her?"

He turned and looked at me again, sort of surprised this time. "*I* don't know what I'd do. I guess I'd made him leave,—I don't know."

"You would protect her, though, wouldn't you? You wouldn't just leave her by herself, alone with him?"

"Of course, I'd protect her, I guess. I don't know. I'll probably never get married, though, so I don't know what I'd do."

"Oh." The quiet of this end of the beach pushed out seagulls' cries and the irregular rumble of waves falling on the sand.

He turned all the way around and began walking toward the towel. "Well? Don't you think we've come about far enough? Ready to head back?"

"All right. Sure." Then I suddenly laughed my loud, unfeminine laugh again, and slapped his sunburned arm hard. "Beat you back!" And I ran as fast as I could.

Passé

Footsteps of a thought—
    I heard them
Walking gently through my mind:
    Moment's knowledge,
    Then distraction—
Only footprints left behind.

ELIZABETH ANN KERR

Question

Said I
But why?
They sighed.
I died.

LILLIE ROBINSON

STAFF/SPRING/1965

Editor/Martha Winders
Advisor/Mrs. Gordon K. Chalmers
Assistant Editor/Rose Mitchell
Associate Editors/Marney Collins, Linda Folk
Business Manager/Mary Margaret Rogan
Make-up Editor/Pam Grebe
Art Editor/Rhett Sapp
Essay Editor/Becky Ballentine
Fiction Editor/Carole Cameron
Poetry Editor/Linda Folk
Copy Editors/Kathy Browne, Jo Learned
Typist/Kay Davis